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Matthew 6:25-34

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WORRY & TRUST Series: Breaking the Worry Cycle

Last week we started talking about this balance between worry and trust in our lives. God wants you and me to learn to trust him more, and to worry less. But that is tough to do, isn't it?

I do trust God. I believe in him. I do trust that God loves me. And you probably trust God, too. But every single day that we live in this crazy, scary, broken world of ours, there are so many real dangers, serious problems, looming tragedies, and ever-present evils for us to be concerned about. Our worries pile up, higher and higher. How can we break the cycle of worrying?

The Bible tells us that trusting God is the key. But how can something so abstract – how can something we do in our hearts and in our heads – how can trust possibly overcome all the real-world worries in our lives?

Most of us, after all, don't worry just a little bit. We worry a lot! Most of us spend a good deal of our time stressing, worrying, fretting anxiously over all sorts of cares and concerns. The average person, experts say, spends years of life wrapped in chronic, cyclical worry. In fact, a recent study in England shows that people spend an average of 14 hours a week focused in a worried fashion on their weight, their lack of savings, credit card debt, job security, relationship woes, parenting problems, and other stressors. The same study shows that an average of six nights' sleep per month are lost due to excessive worry.

Maybe they worry a whole lot more over in England than we do here in the USA; but I doubt it. In our fast-paced, increasingly-diverse, technologically-complex American culture, with a whole world of information and news literally at our fingertips, we have a lot to worry about, don't we? Sometimes it seems as if we face mountains of worries.

Well, remember what Jesus said about mountains, and trust? Read Matthew 17:20 with me. **“Truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”**

That's quite a promise, for worriers like us. Jesus isn't saying, “Hey, you have a big, brawny, super-sized faith, in order to move mountains.” He says, “If you have faith, and trust, as tiny as a wee little seed, that's all it takes.”

What makes trust so potent? It's not what we put into it, or how much effort we expend to apply our faith. Trust is only powerful when it's aimed properly. The power of trust is always in its object. In what, or in whom, are you trusting?

Jesus today wants to help us focus our trust. One of the real keys to breaking the worry cycle is for Christians to focus, and concentrate, our trust appropriately. We shouldn't just trust that somehow God's going to make our problems magically disappear. Nor are we to selfishly trust that God's always going to answer all our prayers in the exact way that we want him to.

Trust, instead – and this is the truly powerful, mountain-moving, life-changing trust – trust in what God is providing for you in his Son Jesus. Trust and believe that that your life is not just being lived here in Wake Forest, in North Carolina, in the USA, on planet Earth. Trust and believe that you are part of the glorious, eternal kingdom of God. Trust that the

King of the universe, our God of grace and love, is caring for you.

Today we learn from Jesus to focus our trust properly. We can actually let go of some of our worries if we're really, truly, trusting in our heavenly Father's love above all else. If you honestly believe and have confident trust that, because of Christ Jesus, you definitely have a place in God's kingdom, then you can begin to release some of those worldly cares and concerns.

Because in God's kingdom, all our human needs are put in their rightful place. There the Father's love provides all things great and small, daily needs and special requirements. In our Father's kingdom, everything needed for life is provided by him.

Remember what Jesus said about the kingdom of God, when he first started his public ministry? Let's read Mark 1:15. **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel."** See, God's kingdom is not just up there in heaven. God's kingdom exists wherever his rule and reign are present. And when Jesus, the holy Son of God appeared, in our flesh, in our world, the kingdom of God was at hand. When Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, rules in your heart, the kingdom of God is in you.

Jesus, in his sermons, talked a lot about the kingdom, and shared many parables about that kingdom. Most important, he wanted his disciples to realize that, through faith in him, they were included. They were participating. They, and we, have a place in the kingdom of God. He died to make that happen. He forgives us, to secure our place in the kingdom.

So Jesus, encouraging us to trust more and worry less, teaches us to focus our trust. He says, in Matthew 6:33,

“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” In other words, value your place in God’s kingdom first and foremost, above all. Appreciate what God gives you more than anything. Receive God’s grace, his forgiveness, his mercy, his salvation, his spiritual favor, as a member of his kingdom. Seek these things first. When you value and esteem these awesome blessings most of all, then all the rest will find their place. When you consciously and intentionally treasure what God gives you in his kingdom more than you treasure food, clothing, finances, family, health, soccer ... you’ll find that you’ll stop worrying so much about all of that.

How can simple trust be so strong? Keep your trust focused! As the Lord says, “Seek first the kingdom, and all these things will be added to you.” Amen.